

My name is Geoffrey Begey and I live in Wichita, KS. I am a musician and a music fan. I am very concerned about the state of radio today and its effect not only on the local community, but on the state of popular music as a whole.

I am an unsigned local musician in the Wichita KS area with the group No Soliciting. Wichita KS has one of the greatest music scenes in the country, with such nationally known acts as O'Phil and The Gooding Band calling Wichita home. No one knows this because we don't get played on the radio as much as we should in the local market.

Look, here's how it goes down in Wichita. There is only ONE non-corporate owned radio station in town, and that is KANR FLY 92.7 FM. I really feel for The Fly. They are a truly good radio station that does not have the funds or power to compete with the ClearChannel owned radio stations in town. They are a low-budget, low-power station that truly plays a wide variety of music; unlike the corporate stations in town that play the same songs every couple of hours. How many times of a day can you hear the same song? Apparently, not enough for Clear Channel. They keep ramming the same stuff down our throat over and over.

KANR does a half-way decent job of supporting the rich, diverse local music in Wichita by playing a local band once an hour and having the show "Local Band Friday" every Friday night between 6-7pm CST. However, they are a business and they need to make money, so they don't play local music as much as they, and I know that they would rather do that than play what they think they have to play in order to turn a profit.

We have turned in an advance copy of our forthcoming debut album to the local radio station, and they have played one song off the album twice. So at least I can say that we have had a song played a couple of times on the radio. However, KANR is the only station in town that WILL play local music. If you try to take ANYTHING to one of the other corporate stations in town, they will kick you right out of the door.

Only KANR supports Wichita musicians. But then again, KANR is the only locally-owned station in Wichita. The corporate owned stations don't care anything about Wichita and what Wichita wants or needs, they only care about their profits from advertisers and their kickbacks from bands that have the power, i.e. major label acts. Like the old saying goes, "Radio only plays what THEY want you to hear."

The FCC should come up with something, because radio has gone down the tubes. Radio is worthless now. It's all programmed and emotionless and doesn't care about the listener. Oh, they say they do, but they don't. Especially classic rock radio. The Eagles once an hour, every hour. Don't get me wrong, I like The Eagles. However, they only play five songs from any given artist and only play from about 15 artists and they end up repeating the same songs over and over. Some stations have "The No Repeat Workday," but that's a joke. As soon as that's over, they can breathe a sigh of relief and start playing the same songs over and over.

Radio, which used to support music, has in turn killed it. Music isn't about music. Music is about money. And corporate radio helped make it that way.

I'm not sure how the FCC should define local programming, but I know what local programming ISN'T. And it ISN'T syndicated radio programs. That's just lazy. All they have to do is put a tape in or beam in the satellite signal or whatever it is that they do, and go back to their coffee.

Also, local programming ISN'T commercials. That's usually the only local programming I hear. Syndicated shows and local commercials. That's radio of today.

I don't care what the FCC does, but I'll tell you this: The FCC needs to

do something to stick to these guys for sticking it to us. Radio used to be about local flavor with local DJs. However, radio is just like what the rest of America is today. One big strip mall from coast to coast. And when there isn't a strip mall, it's a Starbucks, Wal-Mart, Best Buy, McDonald's or Lowe's. Radio, unfortunately, is just like that. Coast to coast the same thing.

There should be some kind of rule dictating how many hours of programming should be dedicated to syndicated shows. Which, if I had my way about it, would be zero hours. Now, the thing I think the FCC has to be careful about is AM. Unfortunately, syndicated talk shows on AM is AM's only saving grace. If it weren't for talk radio, AM would be dead. No if's and's or but's about it.

So, I think there should be different rules for stations depending on their format. If the station plays music, as far as I'm concerned the shows and playlists should be generated LOCALLY. But, if it's a talk radio show, then by all means, allow them to carry syndicated shows.

All programming decisions should be made locally.

And finally, I now this is a BIG wish and it probably won't happen, but could you make a rule to make local stations support their local music? Mandating that they feature local artists? That, in my humble opinion, would go a long way toward supporting musicians in ALL parts of the country.

Local programming should include both: news and public affairs AND local music. A local music show on ALL local stations would be incredible, but due to the state of radio today, impossible. Stations should be forced to play local artists. I believe that a percentage of their programming should be local musicians and nothing else. This may not work as well in small markets, but in large markets, radio stations should have no problem finding bands and solo artists to fill the programming. So I think that the percentages should be based on the size of the markets. I think that all these radio stations would be pleasantly surprised by the reaction from playing local artists. I think it would be warmly received EVERYWHERE.

Nope, charity events and fund-raisers shouldn't count as local support. They do this stuff anyway to make us think that they like us. It's the same type of stuff that corporations do. It's a public relations thing that they do just so we won't hate them.

Well, there may be a federal law against it, but every knows that record companies and radio are like the Mafia. "What Federal Laws?" Payola I believe, but can't prove, still exists. How can so many bad artists that nobody likes get played so often on the radio? There HAS to be some form of kickback going on there. Has to be. I refuse to believe that there isn't.

Any payment to a radio station relating to the playing of a song should be ILLEGAL. I don't care if it's corporate or indie. And what I mean by payment is money, or something like "scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" sort of thing, etc.

I think if an artist does a free concert, it shouldn't be payola.

I think record labels should be allowed to place ads advertising albums. I don't see anything wrong with that.

Voice-tracking is a joke, it's wrong, it's insulting to the intelligence of the listener, and really what it is is an out-and-out lie to the listener. They are representing themselves to be something that they're not. And that should be illegal, I think.

I would agree that 'national' playlist ARE stifling to local artists and the community as a whole. I HATE NATIONAL PLAYLISTS. Again, I go back to my 'local flavor' comments. Also, to my 'radio only plays what they want you

to hear' comments. National playlists should be illegal. All playlists should be generated locally with local input. YES, BIG YES to requiring local artists to be played, but I think percentages should be based on market size because this rule could hurt small market stations.

I don't know of any 'LPFM' stations around here, but I like the idea. I would like to see more of these stations. It would be a great boon to the local community but really, how far is 100 watts going to carry? Still, with the right promotion to let people know that they are out there, it would be GREAT for local music in communities where corporate radio ignores local artists.

I'm glad to see that the FCC wants to do something about this problem facing the nation today. A few corporations in this country maintain a monopolistic stranglehold on the radio waves, and unless you have the price of admission as an artist (i.e. major label backing), then you might as well as forget about the radio.

My only hope is that the good that can be done for the country here and know isn't cast aside by politics and lobbying from the few corporations that run radio to maintain their stranglehold on the radio.

Thank you very much. CORPORATE RADIO SUCKS.

Geoffrey Begey
Wichita, KS